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ABSTRACT

In order to ascertain to what degree educational researchers are concerned with and involved in social issues, a questionnaire on social attitudes, activism, political attitudes, attitudes toward AERA, and research activities was mailed to 672 members of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). When demographic characteristics of the 386 returns were compared with total AERA membership, the sample appeared to be representative. Analysis of the returns indicates that there is a considerable amount of activist orientation toward social, political and educational issues, and that many members of the organization mistakenly believe that such activism is not widespread in AERA. Activism, futhermore, is somewhat greater for higher-status members of AERA, i.e., those who head research projects and write a good deal. AERA members also tend to have a positive attitude toward educational research and its relation to political and social problems. Also, a majority of members in the sample indicate a willingness to volunteer research skills for the use of community groups, even if such groups were challenging the public schools. Action suggestions include an annual AERA prize for the best research effort devoted to the solution of a pressing social problem and AERA encouragement of members' volunteering their research skills to community groups. (RT)

ED039196

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS AND SOCIAL VALUES

A Preliminary Report

by

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During the first week of December, 1969, a questionnaire titled "AERA Members and Social Issues" was mailed to 672 members of the American Educational Research Association. The introduction to the questionnaire stated:

> The issues of "relevance" and "involvement" - a commitment to social improvement - are being raised in virtually all professional organizations. These issues are certainly germane to AERA, and we anticipate that they will be reflected in many ways at the upcoming Minneapolis convention. Of all professionals, researchers are perhaps most responsible for basing their decisions on the best available information. May we request your help, therefore, in seeking to determine some of the attitudes and activities of AERA members vis-a-vis some social and educational issues? We make this request just prior to the convention since we believe this type of data must be fresh if it is to be truly useful.
>
> We plan to report our findings at the March meeting because we believe this type of information will help to provide an empirical base for debate and discussion. This questionnaire is being mailed to a 10% sample of the AERA membership. We have attempted to make it brief, direct and reasonably open-ended. Feel free to add comments whenever you would like. Our goal is to open communication and we would agree that this questionnaire has its limitations.
>
> We are not planning a follow-up mailing on non-returns, since we hope that the ideas in the questionnaire are of sufficient importance to warrant an immediate reply. The decision not to do a follow-up mailing also ensures absolute anonymity.
>
> If we are to present our findings in early March, we will need to hear from you promptly. Please look the questionnaire over, and if your decision is to fill it out, do so right away. Our sincere thanks, and we look forward to sharing this information with you in Minneapolis.

Prepared for presentation at the American Educational Research Association meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota on March 4, 1970.

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Our sincere thanks go to the 386 persons who responded to the questionnaire and shared their views with us. We also wish to thank Dr. Richard Dershimer for his help in obtaining the sample for the study. This research is fully autonomous, however, and the questionnaire and analysis of findings are the responsibility of the authors. This paper summarizes the preliminary findings derived from the survey.

The Problem

Professionals in virtually all scholarly associations are being challenged by some of their colleagues and students to examine the relevance of their scholarship to the amelioration of critical social issues. Both the values of individuals and the policies of organizations are exposed in the debate. The question raised in Robert Lynd's Knowledge for What? over 30 years ago is louder than ever: Will the findings of social science be utilized to improve society? More recently, young and radical sociologists have rephrased the question, asking: "Knowledge for Whom?" Does society indeed benefit from all of the grants, the research and the publications central to a scholar's career?

The same questions have been raised in AERA and it is reasonable to assume that they will be asked far more forcefully in the years ahead. The organization of a special interest group devoted to a Research Focus on Black Children is one major evidence of concerns shared by a number of members. In essence, these concerns can be compressed into a three-part question: who does research, on whom, and for what purpose? An interesting exchange between Dwight Allen and John J. Kennedy in the Educational Researcher both expanded the issues involved and suggested the range of opinions extant among researchers. Allen writes:

For those of us who have spent a good deal of time and energy in conducting educational research it is always a trying matter to reflect on the total significance of what we have done. In a world filled with more impending and on-going social catastrophes than I care to repeat here, it is always a little disconcerting to spend one's energy searching for correlations between number of head nods by teachers and right answers on spelling tests by students. We can always invent rationalizations for some of our trivial research. We can sometimes convince others (and, rarely, ourselves) that our small-scale, narrowly-focused experiments will eventually reveal profound and relevant conclusions. But there is an enormous world to be crossed between teachers' head nods and my effectiveness as a teacher of citizenship with a student who was executed for murder several years later - not to mention the leap from there to cities which are exploding with violence and suffocating from pollution and overcrowding. New approaches, new techniques, new arenas must be found for educational research. Rather than decry the fact that no one thought to collect evidence or manipulate a program systematically in advance, we must find ways to evaluate the results of programs after they have been implemented or even completed.[1]

Kennedy responded with:

> Many of us engaged in "counting teacher head nods" are well aware of the staggering problems confronting our society, especially the youth in our society. We share with Dean Allen a deep concern and desire to attend to these problems. Our fondest dream would be to discover through our research efforts that insight, or relationship, that would eventually ameliorate one or several malignant social ills. Further, "teacher head nod counters" are probably most aware that they do not possess the capacity to provide solutions to a broad range of educational problems. We persist, however, in our arduous attempts to ferret out basic behavioral relationships, not, I hope, because we lack the courage to tackle the pressing social problems of which Dr. Allen speaks, but rather because of a conviction, grounded in the history of science, that major problems, whose fundamental solutions are amenable to empirical inquiry, are resolved only after an extended period of what Thomas Kuhn calls "normal science." That is, our knowledge of the scientific tradition teaches us that relevant methodologies and problem conceptualizations emanate not from the efforts of those who decry the adequacy of existing methods, but rather from those who are totally immersed in the everyday work of refining theories at the molecular level, of meticulously searching for exceptions - in short, counting head nods. True, as Kuhn points out, the mundane pursuit of normal science at the basic level frequently insulates that research community from those socially crucial problems that are not amenable to normal scientific techniques. However, and this is the lesson clearly taught by the history of science, conceptual and methodological innovations are not a function of the needs manifested in the societal mileu but rather

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1. Dwight W. Allen, "Significant Differences: On the Social Insignificance of Statistical Significance - A Plea for New Strategies of Evaluation," Educational Researcher, XX, No. 8, 1969, page 3.

> the maturational result of the undertaking of basic study. It is through the exercise of basic refinement, of concern with the insular aspects of existing constructs, that the revolutionary conceptions and methodologies emerge. And basic normal science needs to be exhaustive before the need, experience, and intellectual resources can be marshalled to generate innovative research method.[2]

The debate, hence, has been joined. Our central purpose is to encourage that debate by offering some data regarding some members of AERA and their attitudes toward social issues. Since there is no evidence to suggest that war, racism, prejudice, poverty, privilege and inequality are on the wane, we wish to obtain some insight into where we stand as a collectivity of scholars on these issues; to what degree researchers are concerned with them, and to what degree are they involved in them. We are of the opinion that a researcher's values greatly influence his research interests, thus we believe it necessary to state our position and some of our research decisions at the outset.

First, we share the ideas stated by Professor Allen, and we are vitally concerned with the need for a far sharper research focus on the social issues of our time (particularly as they exist in educational settings, but certainly not exclusively so).

Second, the data reported here were gathered on the premise that, whatever one's persuasion, such information provides an empirical base for on-going debate. Regardless of political-professional values vis-a-vis research and its relevance to social problems, we believe that researchers must share a concern for evidence. The findings reported at this symposium are preliminary, but they are among the first bits of evidence about ourselves and about our organization that relate directly to the social issues that influence us all.

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2. John J. Kennedy, "A Reaction to D.W. Allen's Editorial," Educational Researcher, XX, No. 10, 1969, page 4.

Third, in seeking to measure attitudes toward issues, a research decision is involved in determining which issues are specified on the instrument. Although the questionnaire we used did have open-ended portions, asking the respondent to identify crucial social and educational issues, and adding free comments, many items were of fixed-alternative design, asking for a reaction to questions about racism, poverty, the Vietnam war and educational reform. We chose these issues not only because we are personally concerned with them, but because they have dominated the McLuhanesque world of which we are a part. They are not the only issues of our time, but they are among the most critical. While a handful of respondents criticized us as being biased because we focused on these issues, other respondents complimented us for the same reason. Such diversity of opinion is not news, but we believe that our assessment of the actual attitudinal state of affairs among AERA members on these particular issues will be news to many, and usefully so.

Fourth, we deliberately mailed our questionnaire less than three months before the convention date so that the data would be reasonably "fresh". Opinions and attitudes on social issues are in constant flux; findings are never static. Would our data have looked different just after the recent Chicago convictions? Quite possibly. Unfortunately, some consumers of research are not aware of this caveat. So this study represents data drawn from AERA members' view of the world in December and January of this year.

We have had less than a month in which to examine the data, so the report is genuinely preliminary. We welcome suggestions in this session and afterward, as to other useful analyses.

Lastly, we feel no discomfort in gathering data, analyzing it, and then immediately utilizing the data in debates, and the formation of policy recommendations or proposals for action. We are conscious, however,

of a fine point. Do we see our action implications in the data because they are "plain to see," or because of value sets which precede the data? We assume that both factors are at work. The issue is not new, but it needs careful attention as we proceed.

In any case, we look forward to the reaction of our colleagues at this symposium, and to the papers delivered by other panelists stating other positions and concerns regarding research and its impact on social reality.

The Sample[3]

The membership of AERA on September 17, 1969 consisted of 9,607 persons. Of this total, 6,738 were active members eligible to vote and to held office. The remaining 2,869 members were wither student, associate or international members. A 10% sample of the 6,738 active members was drawn by a program designed to select every tenth member according to his zip-code number.

The questionnaire was mailed during the first week in December to 672 members. We decided against utilizing a code for identifying questionnaires as well as doing a follow-up mailing for two reasons: (1) we wished to ensure absolute anonymity; and (2) we wished to crudely test the hunch that the nature of the questionnaire would warrant a reasonably high return. We have 386 usable returns, or a 58%, which is a reasonably good response rate for a one-shot mailing in the midst of the holiday season.

The questionnaire replicated several of the demographic questions that appear on AERA membership forms in an effort to compare some of the characteristics of our return with those of the total membership. We were surprised to learn that the demographic characteristics of the total AERA membership are only currently in process of being analyzed.[4] The tables below compare

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3. Our thanks to Miss Shirleyanne Bloom of Dr. Dershimer's staff for her help in providing the sample.
4. Our thanks to Mrs. Caroline Persell of the Bureau of Applied Research, Columbia University, for allowing us to use information from her analysis of AERA membership characteristics.

the percentage returns for our sample with those of a much larger sample of 5,231 members. It should be noted that our sample was drawn from the total membership. Because of the discrepancy in the universes represented, tests of significance were not applied. The similarity in the percentages is encouraging none the less.

Table 1

COMPARISON OF THOSE RETURNING SOCIAL ISSUES QUESTIONNAIRE WITH LARGE AERA SAMPLE

Item 32. Employing Agency:

N = 386 %	N = 5231 %	
9	13	Public, Private or Parochial School
4	4	State Agency
3	3	Federal Agency
72	65	College or University
2	3	Industry
5	5	Private Research Organization
4	3	Regional Educational Lab or Title III Center
3	<1	NA
0	1	Other

Item 33. Present Major Position:

%	%	
<1	0	Public, Private or Parochial School Teacher
47	36	College or University Teacher
1	9	Student
23	24	Administrator or Supervisor
21	22	Researcher
1	2	Counselor or School Psychologist
1	3	Curriculum Specialist
5	7	Other
1	2	NA

Item 34. Major Field of Highest Degree

%	%	
19	19	Psychology
2	2	Sociology
67	71	Education
0	1	History
0	<1	Anthropology
<1	<1	Economics
1	1	Political Science
2	1	Physical or Biological Sciences
1	1	Humanities
8	6	Other
1	0	NA

Item 35. To which divisions do you belong in AERA?[5]

%	%	
24	21	Administration
40	34	Curriculum and Objectives
49	45	Instruction and Learning
47	43	Measurement and Research Methodology
12	12	Student Development and Personnel Services
2	2	History and Historiography
11	7	Social Context of Education
6	9	None
3	6	NA

---

5. Percentages exceed 100% for this item, since many members belong to more than one division.

Three other demographic characteristics in our sample are interesting:

Sex		Race		Age	
Male	82%	White	96%	Under 20	0
Female	16%	Black	1%	21 - 30	11%
NA or rejected	2%	Oriental	1%	31 - 40	38%
		Indian-American	0	41 - 50	32%
		NA	2%	51 - 60	13%
				Over 60	5%
				NA	1%

If our sample is representative, we are heavily white, male, and middle-aged - or at least in the non-trustable over-30 bracket.[6] (In passing, the age data, together with Persell's finding that 68% of AERA members received their latest degree during 1960-69, reinforces the generalization that educators tend to earn their doctorates later than other professionals.)

A discrepancy appears to exist in one area of comparison. 57% of our sample indicated they were designated as the principal (or one of the principal) investigator(s) of a research project in 1968-69; 26% of the larger sample stated they were investigators of projects funded from the ourside in 1969. The questions asked do not correspond, however. Our questions asked respondents to identify themselves as principal, or a<u>n one</u> of the principal, investigator(s). We also did not specify that funds for the project had to come from outside the employing agency. The variance in response, thus, may not be as meaningful as it appears.

We conclude that our sample corresponds reasonably well with the best available comparative data on the organization as a whole. Our findings, thus, can be generalized with caution from the 386 persons who responded to the questionnaire.

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6. Example of value-based implication from data: AERA needs wide and full discussion of why such a tiny percentage of black members; why women are do under-represented; why young researchers are in such a minority. We believe such distributions indicate a serious under-use of resources; they do not parallel what is to be found in leading graduate schools, or in research and development organizations, as far as we know. Policy decisions need making in this area.

The Findings[7]

Our results are organized in five sections. First, we review the gross results in terms of sample members' attitudes toward social and political issues and toward educational research. Next, we explore what turned out to be some striking distortions in members' perceptions of AERA. Third, we give a brieg analysis of the social and educational problems which members feel are important. Fourth, we review the political and social activism of members, and show how it is related to other factors, such as research productivity. Fifth, we focus on members' willingness to volunteer their skills to community groups.

Attitudes

Several items focused sharply on the war and on racial tensions. Respondent percentages are shown.

Table 2
SOCIAL/POLITICAL ATTITUDES

10. Which of these positions on the Vietnam war is closest to your own?
    - 23% The U.S. should withdraw immediately.
    - 47% The U.S. should reduce its involvement and encourage the emergence of a coalition government in South Vietnam.
    - 24% The U.S. should try to reduce its involvement while being sure to prevent a communist take over in the south.
    - 2% The U.S. should commit whatever forces are necessary to defeat the communists.
    - 4% NA

11. Where <u>de facto</u> segregation exists, Black people should be assured control over their own schools. (Check one)
    - 22% Strongly agree
    - 50% Agree with reservations
    - 18% Disagree with reservations
    - 6% Strongly disagree
    - 4% NA

12. The main cause of Negro riots in the cities is white racism. (Check one)
    - 14% Strongly agree
    - 34% Agree with reservations
    - 31% Disagree with reservations
    - 17% Strongly disagree
    - 4% NA

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7. We are strongly indebted to Noel Tichy of Teachers College for his intelligent management of the data processing under great time pressure.

A general comment is that the responses are by no means conservative. The more frequently chosen responses on items 10 and 11 would be characterized as "liberal" by most people, and even on the racism item, 48% endorse the liberal side of the item.

We also naturally asked several questions on "classic" concerns of educational researchers, such as those reflected in the Allen-Kennedy debate.

Table 3

ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

13. A scholar's teaching and research inevitable reflect his political values. (Check one)
 14% Strongly agree
 42% Agree with reservations
 29% Disagree with reservations
 12% Strongly disagree
 4% NA

15. We often hear the statement: "I am a researcher and a scholar. It is up to others to implement the findings of research." How closely does this statement correspond with your position? (Check one)
 2% Strongly agree
 16% Agree with reservations
 32% Disagree with reservations
 46% Strongly disagree
 3% NA

16. We would all agree that distinctions can be made between applied and basic research. To what degree, in your opinion, are these distinctions actually "rationalizations" used by some researchers for avoiding controversial issues that must be researched? (Check one)
 19% To a great degree
 42% To some degree
 25% To a slight degree
 9% Not at all
 5% NA

17. "Much educational research tends to perpetuate the status quo in education." How do you react to this statement? (Check one)
 20% Strongly agree
 32% Moderately agree
 19% Neither agree nor disagree
 19% Moderately disagree
 6% Strongly disagree
 3% NA

Here too, "liberal" attitudes seem present. A majority of the sample believes that values and research/teaching are somehow linked, reject the idea of strict separation of research and implementation, and agree that applied/basic distinctions may serve as an excuse for avoiding controversy. A slight majority (52%) also believe that current educational research tends to perpetuate the educational status quo.

Members' Perceptions of AERA

Given this latter view, it is perhaps not surprising to note the distribution of responses to this item:

1. As you think of issues such as racial problems, student activism, the Vietnam Wat, poverty, and so on, to what degree is the AERA a "relevant" organization? (Check one)
   - 9% Very relevant
   - 33% Somewhat relevant
   - 46% Not very relevant
   - 11% Not at all relevant
   - 1% NA or rejected

Our sample of members tends to see AERA as <u>not</u> very relevant to crucial social issues.

Yet we wondered if this perception were in fact veridical. Most social systems contain a large measure of what Merton dubbed "pluralistic ignorance". The response, "This is a Republican town," is given by Democrat after Democrat, each of whom supposes that he is the only Democrat in town. There is some empirical evidence from studies of school systems[8] that the characteristic error in perception of the going norms is to expect that they are more conservative than is in fact true of privately-expressed attitudes.

Informal conversation with friends, many of whom saw AERA as historically a stuffy, conservative organization, suggested to us that conservatism-emphasizing pluralistic ignorance might be at work. We predicted, therefore,

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8. Miles,M.B. The development of innovative climates in educational organizations. Research Note, Educational Policy Research Center, Stanford Research Institute. EPRC 6747-10. Contract OEC-1-7-071013-4274. 1969.

that the actual attitudes of AERA members would prove to be considerably less conservative (more activist) than our sample believed.

The basic mose of data collection was to ask the respondent, first, to consider an attitude item like the following:

> 3. While many researchers are intellectually concerned with educational reforms, to what degree do you think your fellow AERA members are actively involved in efforts to bring about educational reform? Distribute 100% over the four categories to show how you think the AERA membership feels.
>
> _____ Very much involved
> _____ Somewhat involved
> _____ Involved very little
> _____ Not at all involved
> Total = 100% of AERA members

and to distribute 100 percentage points across the four categories to show how he thought the AERA membership feels.[9] The respondent was then asked to give his own attitude. This enabled us to compare the <u>actual</u> distribution of attitudes with those <u>estimated</u>. Since the usual distribution was rather wide and often skewed, we compared the actual distribution with the median of the estimated distribution, which seemed more reasonable than the arithmetic mean.

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9. Making such estimations is not an easy task, and from 16 to 22% of our respondents refused it. We compared refusers with answerers; the general conclusion is that although responses to the specific attitudes being measured by the items in questions do not differ, answerers are slightly more likely than refusers to be politically active, to be liberal in political orientation; and to believe that one should donate one's services to partisan groups. However, the differences are not large. Table 4 shows the item on which the <u>sharpest</u> differences occurred.

Table 4

POLITICAL ACTIVISM ON THOSE REFUSING VS. ANSWERING THE ITEM 7, ON ESTIMATION OF AERA CONCERN WITH RACISM

	No activities	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	Total	
Refused item	32%	21%	19%	15%	13%	21%	(79)
Answered item	68%	79%	81%	85%	87%	80%	(307)
N	(47)	(145)	(120)	(59)	(15)		(386)

$X^2 = 6.26$, 4 df, n.s. We shall have more to say below about the practical impact of this difference, which turns out not to affect the basic finding.

Figs. 1 and 2 show the results on four items. On the issues of educational reform, poverty, and white racism, the findings are sharp and unequivocal. Members of the sample seriously over-estimate the true percentage of "very little" and "not at all" concerned/involved, and just as seriously under-estimate the true percentage of those who are "somewhat" or "very much" involved/concerned. Thus our hypothesis of conservatively-biased pluralistic ignorance is strongly supported. In short, the members of the sample are far more involved in these crucial social issues than they believe is typical for the organization. Yet <u>they</u> are the "organization."[10]

Members of AERA also have a distorted picture of the range of AERA political attitudes, as the second part of Fig. 2 indicates. While the estimated percentage who are "left, vis-a-vis most social issues", as the item has it, is accurately estimated, the true liberal percentage is seriously underestimated, and the remaining categories (middle-of-the-road, moderately and strongly conservative) are overestimated. Thus conservatism-emphasizing pluralistic ignorance is at work here too.[11]

These findings are strong - so strong that even if <u>all</u> those refusing the item has estimated the true percentage accurately, the basic finding would still stand. On racism, for example, the revised situation would read:

True %	Estimated % (median)*	
39	15	Very much concerned
41	30	Somewhat concerned
15	20	Very little concerned
5	10	Not at all concerned

* If <u>all</u> "refusers" were accurate.

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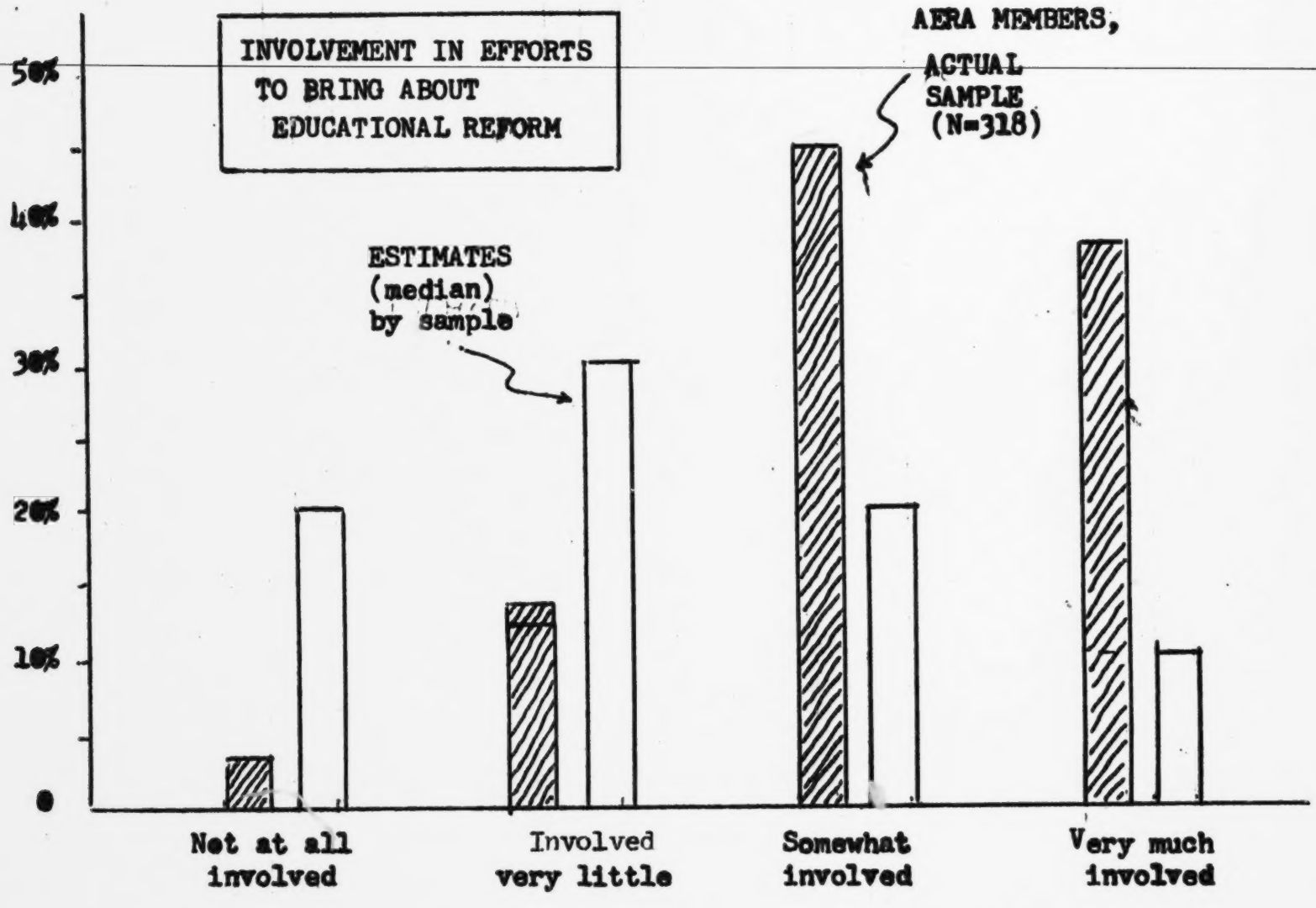
10. In passing, another social-psychological generalization was confirmed; on the poverty and racism items, those holding particular attitudes ("not at all", etc.) tended to <u>overestimate</u> the degree to which others agreed with their position. Those "very much" involved were the <u>most</u> accurate - but even they were still seriously in error.

11. Members' own political attitudes skewed their estimates slightly, but the effect was smaller than on the preceeding attitude items.

Fig. 1


INVOLVEMENT IN EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT EDUCATIONAL REFORM
AERA MEMBERS, ACTUAL SAMPLE (N=318)
ESTIMATES (median) by sample
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0
Not at all involved
Involved very little
Somewhat involved
Very much involved

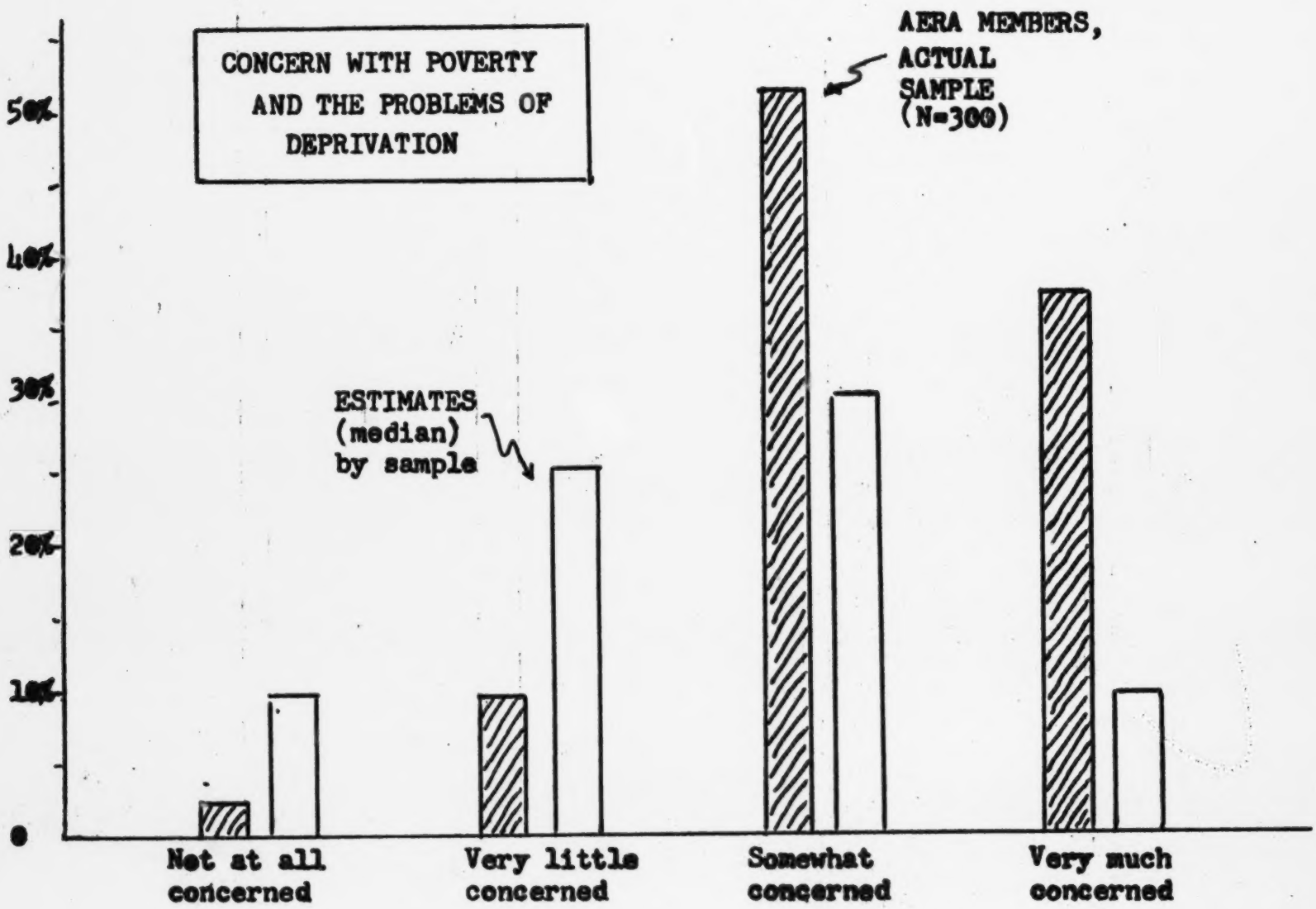
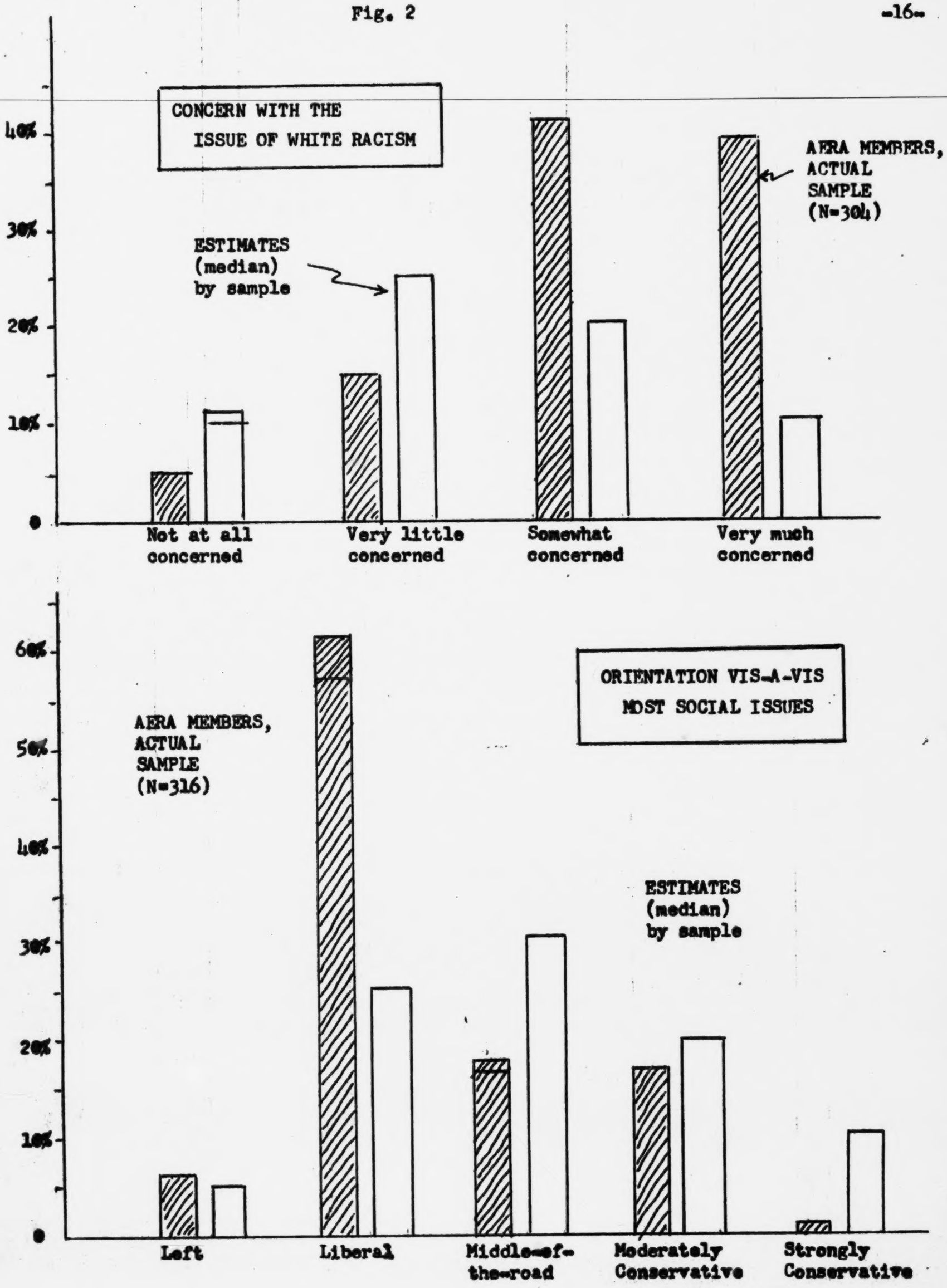

CONCERN WITH POVERTY AND THE PROBLEMS OF DEPRIVATION
AERA MEMBERS, ACTUAL SAMPLE (N=300)
ESTIMATES (median) by sample
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0
Not at all concerned
Very little concerned
Somewhat concerned
Very much concerned

Fig. 2


CONCERN WITH THE ISSUE OF WHITE RACISM
40%
30%
20%
10%
0
ESTIMATES (median) by sample
AERA MEMBERS, ACTUAL SAMPLE (N=304)
Not at all concerned
Very little concerned
Somewhat concerned
Very much concerned
ORIENTATION VIS-A-VIS MOST SOCIAL ISSUES
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0
AERA MEMBERS, ACTUAL SAMPLE (N=316)
ESTIMATES (median) by sample
Left
Liberal
Middle-of-the-road
Moderately Conservative
Strongly Conservative

So it seems safe to conclude that AERA sample members are, so to speak, radically underestimating the true extent of AERA radicalism. There is much more social concern than had been expected.

Perceived Social and Educational Problems

In what directions is this concern for social and educational reform directed? We asked respondents to list the one current social problem they most felt deserved the attention of AERA members, and the one educational problem. Table 5 shows the results.

We will not linger on this table, except to say that it represents a useful set of "priorities" data for AERA members and the Association. Racial problems are the clear first priority, both in society at large and in education. It is clear that most problems are mentioned both in the "social" and "educational" categories; 19% of the respondents either explicitly said there was no difference, or gave the identical problem.

Table 5

PROBLEMS MOST DESERVING AERA MEMBERS' ATTENTION

	In response to "social" question		In response to "educational" question	
Social issues				
Race in society	30%	(115)	10%	(36)
Youth culture, etc.	5	(18)	<1	(2)
Human relations	4	(16)	1	(5)
War, militarism	3	(12)	-	-
Social change	2	(9)	1	(5)
Environment	2	(8)	-	-
Powerlessness, alienation	2	(7)	<1	(2)
Attitude change	1	(4)	-	-
Involvement in decision-making	<1	(1)	1	(4)
Other	3	(11)	-	-
Total social issues	52%	(201)	14%	(54)
Educational issues				
Race and education	18%	(71)	16%	(59)
Educ. methods	<1	(1)	9	(32)
More relevant educ. research	4	(15)	6	(24)
Educational populations (early childhood,etc.)	1	(5)	6	(24)
Teacher improvement	<1	(2)	6	(22)
Educ. outcomes (specific)	-	-	6	(21)
Educ. improvement	3	(11)	5	(18)
Educ. reform	3	(11)	4	(15)
Evaluation	-	-	4	(15)
School in society	3	(12)	3	(12)
Failure of schools	2	(7)	2	(9)
Learning theory	<1	(2)	2	(8)
Curriculum	-	-	2	(8)
School as org.	<1	(2)	2	(8)
Finance	-	-	2	(7)
Reading	<1	(2)	2	(7)
Educ. goals	-	-	1	(4)
Family-school rel.	1	(3)	-	-
Other	-	-	<1	(2)
Total educ. issues	37%	(143)	76%	(295)
No answer	11%	(42)	10%	(38)

Social-Political Activism and its Correlates

We asked respondents to indicate which of nine different activities, (such as speaking at meetings on controversial issues, supporting strikes, teach-ins, etc.) they had participated in during the past two years.

Table 6

NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATED IN

None*	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
12%	38%	31%	15%	4%
(47)	(145)	(120)	(59)	(15)

* includes NA

As might be expected from what we have already found, the sample is a moderately active group; this is confirmed by Table 6, which shows members' self-characterized involvement in local-state-national political issues, and in campus or institutional decision-making and/or "politics". The campus measure shown even higher involvement.

Table 7

MEMBERS' INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL ISSUES, AND IN CAMPUS DECISION-MAKING/POLITICS

	Much less than average	Somewhat less than average	About average	Somewhat more than average	Much more than average	NA
Local-state-national	7% (27)	34% (132)	-* -	43% (167)	12% (27)	3% (12)
Campus	7% (27)	10% (38)	17% (67)	30% (115)	32% (124)	4% (15)

* not asked

The issue is: who are the activists? Are they persons who are respected in AERA, or "fringe", deviant members? We presumed that status in AERA is associated with research production, and asked (a) whether the respondent had been a principal investigator of a research project during 1968-69; and (b) for the number of his professional writings which had been published or accepted for publication in the last two years.

Tables 8A, 8B, and 8C show how our activism measures are related to these measures of status.

Table 8

SELF-RATED ACTIVISM OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND PUBLICATION AUTHORS

A. INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL-STATE-NATIONAL ISSUES

	NA	Much less	Somewhat less	Somewhat more	Much more	N
Principal Investigators	2%	5%	33%	45%	14%	(216)
Others	2%	10%	37%	41%	10%	(164)
N	(13)	(27)	(132)	(166)	(48)	(380)
Publishable writings:						
5+	3%	6%	28%	48%	16%	(79)
3-4	4%	5%	29%	48%	14%	(83)
1-2	2%	7%	45%	39%	8%	(122)
None	2%	11%	33%	40%	14%	(94)
N	(13)	(27)	(132)	(166)	(48)	378

B. INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPUS ISSUES*

	NA	Much less	Somewhat less	Average	Somewhat more	Much more	N
Publishable writings:							
5+	4%	6%	8%	15%	24%	43%	(79)
3-4	5%	7%	11%	14%	29%	34%	(83)
1-2	2%	5%	12%	20%	31%	30%	(122)
None	3%	11%	9%	17%	34%	27%	(94)
N	(16)	(27)	(38)	(67)	(114)	(124)	378

* not run by principal investigator

C. NUMBER OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF PRIMCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND PUBLICATION AUTHORS

	None	1-2	3-4	5+	N
Principal Investigators	8%	37%	30%	23%	(216)
Other	13%	38%	32%	15%	(164)
N	(43)	(143)	(120)	(74)	380
Publishable writings:					
5+	8%	29%	32%	33%	(79)
3-4	10%	29%	37%	24%	(83)
1-2	13%	46%	31%	10%	(122)
None	14%	43%	28%	16%	(94)
N	(43)	(142)	(120)	(73)	378

In general, then, principal investigators are more likely to rate their own political involvement as high, and to engage in many political activities. Those producing many publications in the part two years tend to be more involved in political issues, both generally and on campus, and

engage in many political activities. So our activists do not seem to be deviant; they tend to meet AERA norms more fully than non-activists.

A query of interest, naturally, is: are high-producing AERA members more "left" in political orientation? Table 9 shows faint tendencies in this direction for principal investigators, but not for writings. It seems clear that high producers are more active generally, but not necessarily more "left" activist.

Table 9

POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND PUBLICATION AUTHORS

	Left	Liberal	Middle-of the-road	Moderate Conservative	Strong Conservative	N
Principal Investigators	7%	57%	17%	15%	<1%	(210)
Others	4%	59%	16%	18%	1%	(160)
N	(22)	(220)	(64)	(61)	(3)	(370)
Publishable writings:						
5+	8%	59%	14%	15%	-	(76)
3-4	8%	58%	20%	7%	1%	(79)
1-2	3%	54%	20%	20%	2%	(121)
None	5%	61%	11%	20%	-	(91)
N	(22)	(218)	(63)	(61)	(3)	(367)

Without showing data here, it can be reported that those producing many publications tend to be college or university teachers or researchers rather than administrators; to be 31-50 years old rather than younger or older; and not to be drawn differentially from different AERA divisions.

The next question of interest to us was: is what ways do our measures of activism relate to members' attitudes toward educational research and its uses? Activists presumably have a non-traditional view, and ought to hold that "a scholar's research inevitably reflect his political values", and to question the view that "I am a researcher and a scholar: it is up to others to implement the findings of research."

Tables 10 and 11 show these data. (In passing, the reader should note the row totals in Table 10. The sample's attitudes are on the non-traditional side. The 215 people who endorse item 13 are 56% of the sample; and only 71 people (18%) take the traditional position on item 14.)

The finding in Table 10 (that activists are more inclined than others to feel that teaching/research and political values are linked) is one of the strongest relationships in the tables we ran. To a lesser extent, activists are also inclined <u>not</u> to separate research and implementation.

Table 10

NUMBER OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND ATTITUDES TOWARD RESEARCH

			Activities engaged in				
	Attitude Item		None	1-2	3-4	5+	N
13.	"A scholar's teaching and research inevitably reflect his political values."	Strongly agree	9%	18%	31%	42%	(55)
		Agree with reservations	7%	36%	36%	20%	(160)
		Disagree with reservations	12%	48%	28%	13%	(111)
		Strongly disagree	18%	51%	27%	4%	(45)
		N	(38)	(143)	(118)	(72)	(371
15.	"I am a scholar and researcher. It is up to others to implement the findings of research."	Strongly agree	-	50%	25%	25%	(8)
		Agree with reservations	22%	43%	22%	13%	(63)
		Disagree with reservations	12%	37%	34%	17%	(124)
		Strongly disagree	5%	37%	35%	23%	(179)
		N	(38)	(143)	(120)	(73)	(374)

Table 11

SELF-RATED POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT (LOCAL-STATE-NATIONAL ISSUES) AND ATTITUDES TOWARD RESEARCH

	Attitude Item		Much less	Somewhat less	Somewhat more	Much more	NA	N
13.	"A scholar's teaching and research inevitably reflect his political values."	Strongly agree	4%	33%	40%	22%	2%	(55)
		Agree with reservations	4%	32%	48%	14%	2%	(160)
		Disagree with reservations	12%	38%	39%	10%	2%	(111)
		Strongly disagree	9%	42%	42%	4%	2%	(45)
		N	(25)	(130)	(161)	(48)	(7)	(371)
15.	"I am a scholar and researcher. It is up to others to implement the findings of research."	Strongly agree	13%	13%	63%	-	12%	(8)
		Agree with reservations	14%	40%	33%	10%	3%	(63)
		Disagree with reservations	10%	36%	41%	10%	2%	(124)
		Strongly disagree	2%	33%	47%	16%	1%	(179)
		N	(26)	(131)	(162)	(48)	(7)	(374)

Table 11 shows that the same trends appear when the measure is self-rated involvement rather than reports of specific political activities.

The question here is: do these attitudes relate at all to AERA status in terms of publication production? The picture here is less surprising than as some of our earlier results, as Table 12 shows.

Table 12

NUMBER OF PUBLISHABLE ARTICLES AND ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

	Attitude Item		None	1-2	3-4	5+	NA	N
13.	"A scholar's teaching and research inevitably reflect his political values."	Strongly agree	33%	22%	22%	20%	4%	(55)
		Agree with reservations	25%	34%	22%	19%	-	(160)
		Disagree with reservations	22%	33%	22%	23%	1%	(111)
		Strongly disagree	24%	33%	18%	22%	2%	(45)
		N	(93)	(118)	(79)	(77)	(4)	(371)
15.	"I am a scholar and a researcher. It is up to others to implement the findings of research."	Strongly agree	13%	13%	25%	38%	12%	(8)
		Agree with reservations	21%	30%	22%	27%	-	(63)
		Disagree with reservations	23%	35%	23%	19%	1%	(124)
		Strongly disagree	28%	31%	20%	20%	1%	(179)
		N	(93)	(119)	(80)	(78)	(4)	(374)

In general, it appears that strong endorsers of linkage between teaching/research and values are low producers - but the converse does not hold. And the traditional view of research/development separation seems to be confirmed in the second part of Table 12: persons who have a strong scholar/teacher identity, separate from implementation, produce more.

The last section of our results deals with AERA members' willingness to volunteer their research skills (on request) to a community group of their choice. (It was pointed out that some such groups might be challenging the public schools.)

In our sample, a whopping 71% said they definitely or probably would volunteer their services (and 69% would support a resolution by AERA encouraging its members to do so). Only 12% said they definitely or probably would not volunteer.

(In passing, 58% of the sample also felt that it was appropriate for "educational researchers (not as private citizens but as researchers) to use their skills and expertise in the service of partisan causes (community political, or social action groups)". Only 18% felt this would be inappropriate.)

What factors are related to a member's being willing to volunteer his skills? Table 13 shows that principal investigators are more likely to volunteer than others, and suggests a slight tendency for high-producing writers to say they "probably" will volunteer, while "definitely" volunteering is faintly more likely for low-producing writers.

Table 13

VOLUNTEERING OF SERVICES BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND PUBLISHABLE WRITERS

	Would you volunteer your research skills....						
	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Don't know	Probably Not	Definitely Not	NA	N
Principal Investigators	36%	38%	12%	9%	2%	3%	(216)
Others	29%	39%	15%	11%	2%	4%	(164)
N	(124)	(148)	(50)	(38)	(8)		(380)
Publishable writings:							
5+	30%	43%	13%	9%	1%	4%	(79)
3-4	31%	40%	13%	10%	1%	4%	(83)
1-2	32%	39%	12%	11%	3%	2%	(122)
None	35%	35%	15%	10%	2%	3%	(94)
N	(122)	(147)	(50)	(38)	(8)	(13)	(378)

Some other correlates of volunteering one's services are as follows. (Keep in mind that the rate of volunteering is 71% across the sample.) First, activism. 90% of our high-activist group (5 or more activities) volunteered, while only 43% of persons who engaged in no political activities over the past two years did so. For self-rated involvement in politics, the corresponding figures are 78% and 51%; as we have seen before, the self-rating is a "milder" measure of activism. Using "campus politics" involvement, high activists volunteered at 77%, with low activists at 54%.

Looking at political orientation, we find that 77% of those characterizing themselves as "left" volunteer, and 73% of liberals volunteer. Since 67% of "middle-of-the-roaders" and 67% of conservatives volunteer, we conclude that the volunteer/non-volunteer distinction is not primarily a political matter. Rather, it relates to one's own sense of activism and political involvement.

In terms of one's own job, 75% of college/university teachers volunteer, along with 70% of administrators, and 67% of researchers. The researcher is hardly "detached", but he is somewhat more inclined to be detached than his opposite numbers in teaching and administration.

Volunteers seem to be drawn about equally from all age ranges (72-74%), with the exception of those 51-50 (61%).

Finally, AERA divisions do not contribute equal proportions of volunteers. 84% of those in Student Development and Personnel Services, and 81% of those in the Social Context of Education divisions volunteer. On the other hand, 66% of those in Curriculum and Objectives, and 67% in Measurement and Research Methodology volunteer; other divisions are intermediate.

ACTION IMPLICATIONS

To summarize briefly, we have found, in a representative sample of AERA members, that a considerable amount of activist orientation - toward social, political and educational issues - exists. By and large, the members of the organization mistakenly believe that such activism is not widespread in AERA. Activism, furthermore, is somewhat greater for higher-status members of AERA - those who head research projects, and write a good deal. AERA members also tend to hold non-traditional attitudes toward educational research and its relation to political and social problems. Finally, a majority of all members in the sample indicated a willingness to volunteer research skills for the use of community groups - even if such groups were challenging the public schools.

Below, we have generated a list of possible actions which might be taken by AERA, based on the findings of our study. They are, of course, offered from the standpoint of our value position (that knowledge <u>should</u> make a difference in the world). The appropriate decision-making groups to consider these actions are presumably the Business Meeting, the Association Council, and the Executive Committee, although some do not need formal approval as such.

1. This study and its findings should be given wide publicity, both via the <u>Educational Researcher</u>, and a general news release.

2. The reasons for under-representation of blacks, women, and younger researchers within AERA should be explored in depth, and specific recommendations made as to ways of improving recruiting in these three respects.

3. AERA should offer an annual prize for the best research effort devoted to the solution of a pressing social problem. As with other prizes, an honorarium, a medal, a dinner, a speech by the recipient and wide publicity should be involved.

4. A resolution should be proposed for vote at the Business meeting, to the effect that AERA encourages its members to volunteer (on request) their research skills to community groups, some of whom are challenging the public schools.

5. A clearinghouse function should be established, so that local community groups and others wanting volunteered research skills can locate the resources they want.

6. The priorities found in this study as to the most crucial social and educational problems should be drawn to the attention of the educational research community, and to USOE and other funding agencies. Ways should be found to promote ongoing discussion and determination of priorities for educational research over the next five years.

7. A new special interest group, or other group within AERA, should be formed to provide leadership in coordinating AERA efforts to become more relevant to the social, political, and educational issues of our time.

Whether these or any other actions are taken in AERA, of course, rests on members' willingness to organize to act congruently with the attitudes found in this study.

In conclusion, we might say that (given our own values) we are naturally gratified at the degree of support found for our own position in these data. More generally, we are pleased with the fact that empirical data can be quickly and easily produced to serve as a basis for organizational decision-making by a professional association. And most generally of all, it is pleasant to have some order appear in these data which was theoretically predicted. We are, after all, scientists.